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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.52/Rev.1

Twenty-fourth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/68/17) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.52/Rev.1 on the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region.

2. As indicated in paragraph 2 of the statement, under the terms of operative paragraphs 6 and 7 of draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.52/Rev.1, the General Assembly would: (a) reaffirm the request contained in paragraph 5 of its resolution 67/162 and endorse the proposal of the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/287), with the costs to be borne by the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources as recommended by the Secretary-General, in order to ensure the full implementation of the mandate of the Centre; and (b) request the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report, in accordance with the existing rules and procedures, on the implementation of the present resolution.

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3. The statement submitted by the Secretary-General contains information with respect to the following: (a) the relationship of the requests to the biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2014-2015 and to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (see A/C.5/68/17, para. 3); and (b) the activities by which the requests would be implemented (A/C.5/68/17, paras. 4-13).

4. The table presented in paragraph 15 of the Secretary-General's statement provides a summary of the total estimated additional requirements in the amount of $2,166,600 for the biennium 2014-2015, as follows:

(a) Section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management ($30,400);

(b) Section 24, Human rights ($2,136,200).

5. The regular budget resources above would be supplemented by extrabudgetary resources projected at $2.2 million in the biennium 2014-2015 (A/C.5/68/17, para. 12). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights intends to maintain approximately the same annual level of extrabudgetary financing for the Centre as in 2013, and that, with the receipt of regular budget resources, it would be possible to increase the activities of the Centre in order to meet the demands identified in the region. The Committee was informed that the host Government provides premises and the utilities for the Centre in Doha, which is reported as an in-kind contribution with a value of $138,600 per year, and provided voluntary contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for the activities of the Centre in the amount of $350,000 in 2010 and again in 2012.

6. It is indicated in the statement that, since its establishment, the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region has comprised two Professional posts (1 P-5 and 1 P-3) and two General Service (Local level) support positions financed from extrabudgetary sources (para. 7). According to the Secretary-General, in order to implement the requests contained in draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.52/Rev.1, a total of eight staff would be required, comprising three Professional posts (1 P-5, 1 P-4 and 1 P-3) and resources for one General Service (Local level) support position financed from the regular budget, which would be complemented by two Professional posts at the P-3 level and two General Service (Local level) support positions financed from extrabudgetary sources.

7. The functions and responsibilities of the posts and positions proposed for the Centre are detailed in paragraph 9 of the statement. The Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General proposes one new P-5 post for the Head of the Centre, whose incumbent would manage the Centre and, inter alia, assist in formulating the Centre's workplan; prepare a draft programme of activities and project proposals for United Nations assistance in the field of human rights training to the countries of the region; initiate and coordinate outreach activities; develop education and training tools and programmes on human rights for different target groups; and evaluate the requirements to plan and support human rights strategies in the region covered by the Centre. **The Advisory Committee notes that the functions of the current post of Head of the Centre financed from extrabudgetary sources are proposed to be subsumed under the new post of Head of the Centre (P-5), and it therefore considers that the proposal for the post of Head of the Centre (P-5) should have**

been reflected as a conversion of an existing post financed from extrabudgetary sources. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its recommendation regarding posts proposed for conversion that the pertinent recruitment, rules and regulations be applied as if these were new posts (see A/68/7, para. 104).

8. The Advisory Committee notes that, as described in paragraph 9 (c) of the statement, the functions and responsibilities of the three P-3 Human Rights Officer posts and positions, comprising one proposed new post to be financed from the regular budget and two positions to be financed from extrabudgetary sources, are the same. In this regard, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that all three P-3 posts would be carrying out tasks relating to training, documentation and human rights knowledge, and that the P-3 post funded from the regular budget would ensure the basic sustainability of the training activities, while the two extrabudgetary posts would strengthen and expand the Centre's capacity. Similarly, the Committee notes that the three General Service (Local level) support positions, comprising one proposed new position to be financed from the regular budget and two from extrabudgetary sources, would perform the same functions, as described in paragraph 9 (d) of the statement. **In this regard, the Advisory Committee considers that the rationale for the distribution of the financing under regular budget and extrabudgetary sources has not been sufficiently explained. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to include information on the rationale for the staffing and financing arrangements for the Centre, and to reflect any necessary adjustments in the context of the budget submission for the biennium 2016-2017.**

9. The Advisory Committee notes that a total of $940,000 is proposed for non-post resources under the regular budget in the biennium 2014-2015, including the amount of $647,400 for travel, comprising $520,600 for the travel of participants for two regional training workshops per year, $97,400 for the travel of participants for one regional consultation and $29,400 for the travel of staff. The Committee was informed that the regional consultation, to be held in Doha once every two years, will bring together between 40 and 50 participants from the region to focus on thematic issues identified at the global level primarily by the Human Rights Council, such as the impact of foreign debt on the enjoyment of human rights, protection of minorities, human rights and business and strengthening regional human rights mechanisms. The resources for the travel of staff provide for the Head of the Centre to travel to Geneva for consultations in the context of a meeting of all heads of human rights field presences, as well as for four trips within the region.

10. The Advisory Committee notes from the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region (A/68/287) that in conducting its activities, the Centre seeks to ensure gender balance among participants and trainers and has found that this approach contributes to the success of its training sessions and events (para. 20). The Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that all of the regional training activities of the Centre include a substantive section dealing with women's human rights, and that the allocation of regular budget resources will allow the Centre to develop more specific capacity-building programmes targeting women's human rights. **The Advisory Committee encourages the Centre to ensure continued gender balance in its human rights training activities, and it recommends that the General Assembly request the Office of the High**

Commissioner to provide detailed information on progress made in developing capability-building programmes targeting women's rights in the context of the budget submission for the biennium 2016-2017.

11. According to the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, the geographical mandate of the Centre covers 25 countries: the majority are situated in the Arab region and 3 in South-West Asia (A/68/287, para. 3). In this regard, the Advisory Committee notes from the statement of programme budget implications that regular budget resources would be required to reinforce the staffing of the Centre and to fill gaps relating to the lack of adequate expertise and relevant Arabic-language training materials (see A/C.5/68/17, para. 8). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that to date, three countries covered by the Centre, namely, Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan, have participated in only the initial consultation on the vision of the Centre, which was held in September 2010. The Committee was further informed that participants from those countries in the Centre's activities can be supported either through the use of simultaneous interpretation or by developing and delivering programmes in the languages of those countries. The Committee was also informed that the Centre had commenced with the production of human rights documentation and programmes in Arabic, as it is the language used in 22 of the 25 countries covered by the Centre, and that the provision of the necessary resources will enable the Centre to expand into additional languages, notably Farsi and Urdu in order to cover Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan and, partially, Afghanistan. **While the Advisory Committee welcomes the provision by the Centre of training and related materials in Arabic, it expects that the Office of the High Commissioner will ensure that all of the countries covered by the Centre are provided with training in the appropriate language.**

12. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.52/Rev.1, resources amounting to $2,166,600 (net) would be required for the biennium 2014-2015.**